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252 262 264 [272] cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

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CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

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Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

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For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no preconceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

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[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance.

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on.

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old.

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name. This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone 846 else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the 846 husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

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853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not 862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say
only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying
in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near
the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake,
however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep
soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little
butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered
rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round
the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as
the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time
as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby
will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the
third day after its birth. People do not make any remark
on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to con-
gratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remark-
ing upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual
insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on
these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is con-
sidered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence.
It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three
days following the birth of her child, but after this she may,
if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes
her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier
field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth
the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form
of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps
also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them)
it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains in the stomach during the first few days following their delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

856 By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back: